

**Ithaca
Children's
Garden**

2025 Scholarship Impact Report

For Period November 1, 2025 - Oct 31, 2025

Prepared for
2025 Scholarship Fund Supporters
Dec 12, 2025

A Note to Our Scholarship Fund Supporters	2
ICG Scholarship Program	2
2025 Scholarship Stats at a Glance	2
2025 Scholarship Campaign	3
Mail Segments - 310 mailed pieces	3
Subcampaigns	7
Online Campaign	7
2025 Scholarship Awards By Program	8
2025 Data Analysis and Commentary	10
ICG's Work with the Local Refugee Community	11
Beyond	12
Demographic Tables	13
Testimonials from Scholarship Families	15
A Few Highlights from our Fall Photo Album	16

A Note to Our Scholarship Fund Supporters

Thank you so much for your generous support of the Ithaca Children’s Garden (ICG) Scholarship Fund, a key part of ICG’s aim to make nature accessible to all. As a donor to the fund, this report was prepared especially for you to share how your support is making a difference. If you have questions about the information presented here, we’d love to hear from you. ICG’s Scholarship Program is only possible with your active support and participation. **THANK YOU.**

ICG Scholarship Program

The purpose of ICG’s Scholarship Program is to ensure that cost is never a barrier to a child’s participation in ICG programs by continuing to provide Tompkins County’s most progressive scholarship support for families.

This year, your gift’s impact was doubled by a matching challenge for ICG’s Scholarship Fund. **We are so grateful for your support of the 2025 Scholarship Fund and hope to see you again for the 2026 Fund drive!**

2025 Scholarship Stats at a Glance

- Estimated / Identified need and 2025 Scholarship Fund goal: **\$54,000**
- Total amount raised: **\$56,105**
 - Includes one matching gift of **\$27k**
- Total number of gifts: **157**
- Total amount awarded: **\$46,995.84**
- Total students awarded scholarship: **73**

2025	2024	2023	2022
Raised \$56,105 total towards our goal of \$54,000, including a \$27,000 anonymous donor	Raised \$48,149 total towards our goal of \$49,000, including a \$20,000 anonymous donor	Raised \$36,992 total towards our goal of \$35,000, including a \$17,500 anonymous donor	Raised \$26,459 total, including \$15k anonymous donor match, from 39 donors.

match, from 157 donors. Awarded \$46,995 to support 73 unique children.	match, from 141 donors. Awarded \$43,797 to support 91 unique children.	match, from 172 donors. Awarded \$38,881 to support 86 unique children.	
--	--	--	--

2025 Scholarship Campaign

Following suit with the timing of the successful 2024 Scholarship campaign, the [2025 campaign](#) kicked off in early March and continued through the end of April. ICG received a \$27,000 anonymous matching gift to energize the campaign and established its highest Scholarship Fund goal to date of \$54,000: the anticipated need for the year.

The campaign successfully met and surpassed our goal, **raising a total of \$56,105 — \$6,495 higher than last year’s total of \$48,149.** In addition, the overall number of donors to the Fund increased from 141 to 157. We attribute the increase to strong stewardship of our 2024 Scholarship Donors (by providing this report as a deliverable to showcase impact transparently), increased participation by families during camp sign-ups, and the increased efforts we made to publicize the fund beyond our existing networks.

Mail Segments - 310 mailed pieces

The mailing included a two-sided color letter and an enclosed postcard featuring a QR code that linked to the Campaign website. Letters were mailed to 310 individuals across three segments: (1) Active Scholarship donors; (2) Lapsed Scholarship donors, and (3) 2023-2025 general donors.



Meghan Anderer
409 Turner Place
Ithaca, NY 14850

March 20, 2025



Dear [salutation],

At Ithaca Children's Garden, we believe every child deserves the chance to explore, play, and grow — regardless of their family's financial situation.



"Ithaca Children's Garden has all the fundamental values we look for in a child care program, but we would have been unable to afford the camps without the scholarship fund. Now we are able to have our children experience the excellent and unique values ICG upholds, while also being able to pay for our living expenses."

Lara, ICG Parent

Your past generosity has made this caring support possible for local families. Your gift today to ICG's **Scholarship Fund** will make our childcare and summer camp programs possible for even more families.

For many families, ICG's programs are more than just enriching experiences — they are essential childcare solutions. Tuition allows us to hire and train incredible educators, but it also creates a barrier for some families. The only way we can keep ICG accessible to ALL children is through **community support — with YOU.**

Every gift is an investment in a child's future. Parents tell us that ICG ignites a love for gardening, a deep respect for nature, and a boost in confidence, social skills, and life skills.



“During her time with the Playful Nature Explorers program, her language skills blossomed. She has gained the confidence to communicate her boundaries to children and adults alike, which is so important for children to learn. She has learned how to play with other children and how to negotiate different personalities and — with consistent support from the PNE coordinators — learned to temper her responses to dissatisfaction.”

Stephanie, ICG Parent



This year, our goal is ambitious — \$54,000 to provide scholarships for over 100 local families. Thanks to a \$27,000 matching gift, your support now will go twice as far. But we must meet our goal by April 30.

Will you help us grow a future where every child can experience the magic of ICG, regardless of financial barriers?

Please make your scholarship gift today and plant the seeds for a lifetime of nature connection!

With gratitude for all the ways you have supported ICG families,

Naomi Sukenik
Executive Director

P.S. Be sure to make your gift by April 30 to DOUBLE your impact with our match challenge!



1013 W. State Street
Ithaca NY 14850
(607) 319-4203
ithacachildrengarden.org

Send a check to ICG at this address, or make a gift online on our website!





The Time is Now!

While gifts to ICG's Scholarship Fund will be put to good use all year long, **giving by April 30** allows you to double your impact through a matching gift. Help support more than 100 Tompkins County families this year!

"ICG has all the fundamental values we look for in a child care program, but we would have been unable to afford the camps without the scholarship fund. Now we are able to have our children experience the excellent and unique values ICG upholds while also being able to pay for our living expenses."



ithacachildrengarden.org

Hear more about Lara's story >>



Help a child bloom.

Make a gift to ICG's Scholarship Fund to ensure financial barriers don't hinder any family from experiencing ICG programs.

Give today by scanning this QR code, or mail a check to Ithaca Children's Garden, 1013 W. State Street, Ithaca NY 14850.



Subcampaigns

Our overall campaign included highlights and mini-campaigns to keep it interesting and fresh, such as an April Fool's post featuring giant golden eggs purportedly hatched by Gaia.

1. April Fools Day - April 1
2. Unicorn Day - April 9
3. Earth Day - April 22
4. Daffodil Dash - April 26

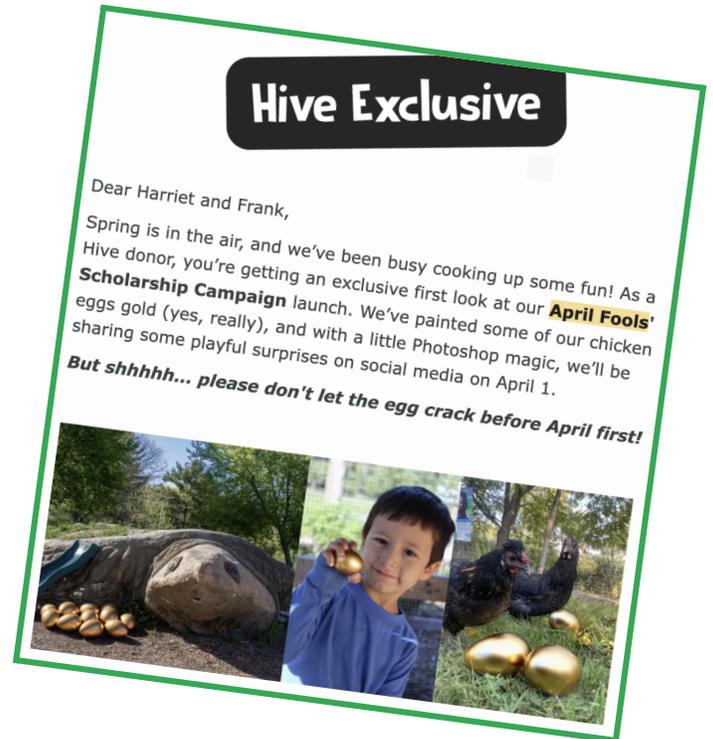
This year's Earth Day was a successful partnership with several key community partners: Visions CFCU, Wegmans, and Ithaca Home Depot.

These corporate partners celebrated Earth Day by volunteering with their teams at ICG to help prepare the Garden for spring. They also provided an additional \$2,000 in matching support for all gifts received on Earth Day. Thanks to the success of this combined effort — measured both in funds raised and leaves raked — we plan to continue this Earth Day event as an annual tradition in support of the physical Garden and the Scholarship Fund.

Further, our camp registration system made it easy for camp families to contribute to the Scholarship Fund during the registration process. In 2025, 23 camp-family donors gave a total of \$460, with gifts ranging from \$5 to \$75 and an average gift amount of \$20.

Online Campaign

In year three of our ICG Scholarship campaign mailing — which reached 310 donors and program participants — we launched an integrated digital campaign utilizing social media and our e-newsletter to connect with ICG's community of friends and supporters. We also created campaign posters with QR codes that allowed visitors to the Garden to learn more about the campaign and easily contribute by scanning the code, [shared a press release](#) with our media contacts, and published three blog posts supporting the campaign:



1. [Earth Day Gift Match Will Triple Donations to Ithaca Children’s Garden’s Scholarship Campaign](#) (April 17)
2. [Climbing Higher: How ICG Scholarships Unlock Nature’s Joy for Every Child](#) (April 21)
3. [From Outdoor Dance Parties to Discovery — Scholarships Make it Possible](#) (April 28)

2025 Scholarship Awards By Program

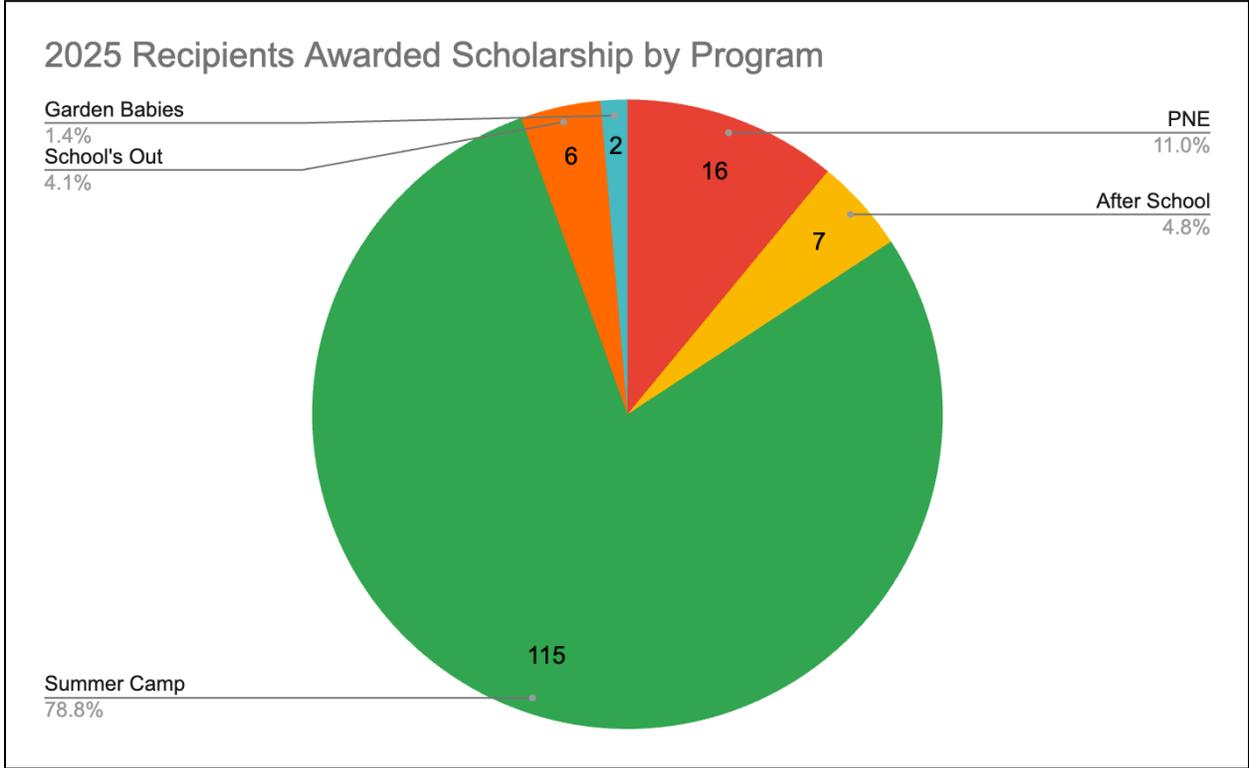
ICG’s Scholarship Fund empowers all families to participate in ICG programs by removing financial barriers. The application process is designed to uphold dignity and respect for applicants, requiring no proof of income or extensive paperwork. Scholarships help ensure that ICG’s educational programs align with our core values of promoting inclusion, diversity, equity, and access in all the ways the Garden serves our broader community. The way in which we extend scholarship resources to the community is an important part of our accessibility work and ethos of preserving dignity and not adding undue burden to those who are already living with financial hardship.

In 2025, over 64% of our Playful Nature families required scholarships to participate, and 22% of Summer Camp families needed assistance as well.

We awarded a total of \$46,995 in scholarships to 73 children across 146 ICG program spaces — ensuring children who might not otherwise have had access to valuable programming and quality childcare could participate.

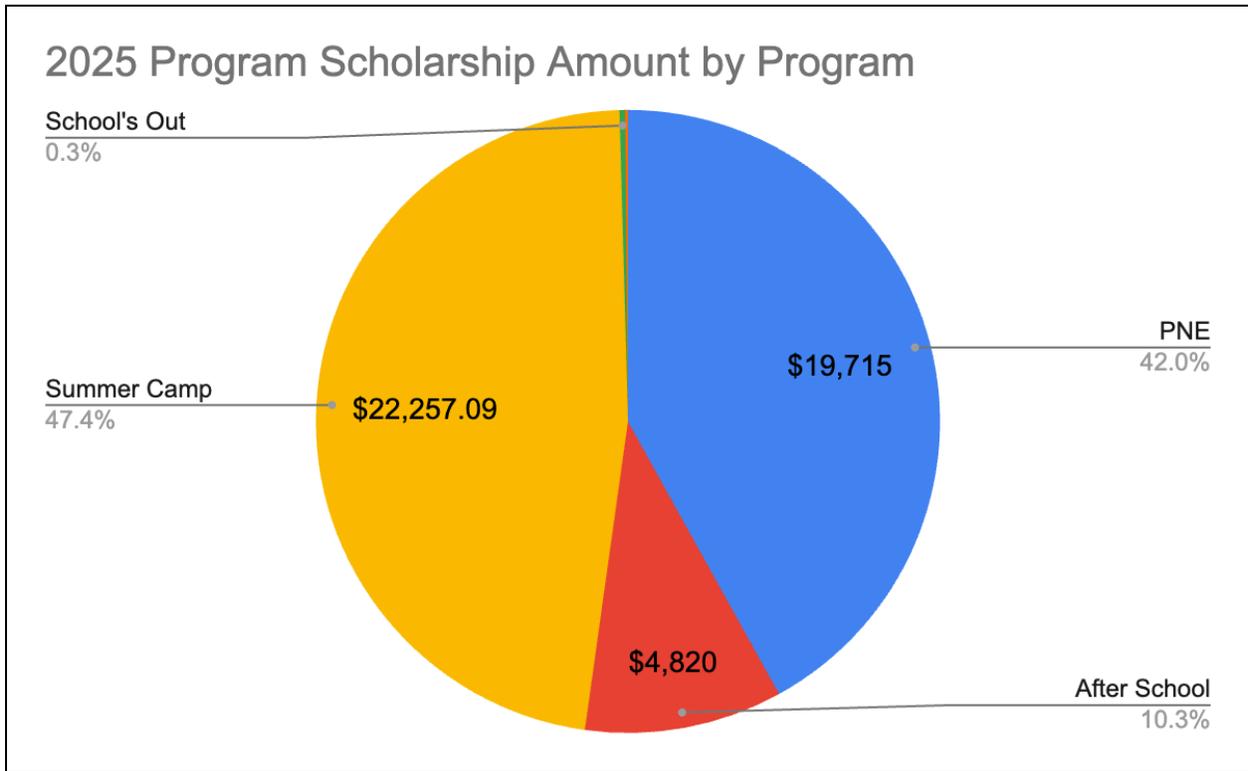
Program	Season/Session	Number of Scholarship Spaces Awarded	Program Scholarship Amount
PNE	Spring	8	\$11,715
After School	Spring	4	\$2,784
Summer Camp	Summer	115	\$22,257.09
PNE	Fall	8	\$8,000
After School	Fall	3	\$2,036

School's Out (6)	Mar 14, 31, Apr 17, 18, Sep 23, Oct 2	6	\$135
Garden Babies ¹	Spring	1	\$37.50
Garden Babies	Fall	1	\$31.25
TOTAL		146²	\$46,995.84



¹ Garden Babies was a new program this year with 18 children and 18 adult caregivers participating in total across both spring and fall programs.

² Represents the total number of scholarship spaces funded by the Scholarship Fund, compared to **73 unique children funded**.



2025 Data Analysis and Commentary

In 2024, 91 unique children were supported by ICG’s Scholarship Fund, and while we expected to fund more than 100 children this year, 73 unique children were funded. Several factors may be considered to explain the difference between projections and actuals.

1. First, we awarded more scholarship support to fewer families. For example, one refugee family with two children received scholarship support for all eight weeks of summer camp, effectively taking 16 scholarship spaces, and two other refugee families received full scholarship support for multiple weeks of camp, meaning more scholarship support and spaces were funded on behalf of fewer families. Read more about our work with refugee families below.
2. Playful Nature Explorers, a program that typically awards a high percentage of scholarships, was underenrolled in 2025. This may be explained by an increasing need among our community members for full-day care, as PNE is a half-day program. ICG is actively exploring licensure requirements to run a full-day preschool program.

3. Summer camp was only eight weeks; in some summers, it is nine weeks, meaning there were fewer overall spaces available.
4. There will always be factors beyond our control affecting the families we serve. For example, families with limited financial means often face other logistical constraints that make planning far in advance and adaptability more challenging. At times, this means that families who enroll in ICG's programs and Scholarship Program are more likely to cancel their registrations, resulting in spaces open with little time to refill them.

In addition, while we anticipated a total need of \$54,000 for 2025, our overall actual need and award amount were lower, totalling \$46,995.84. While we correctly estimated that scholarship need would increase based on rising costs and economic factors (it rose from \$43,795 to \$46,995.84, approximately \$3,200), the need did not rise at the same rate as our estimates.

Our program sizes remained similar to 2024 enrollment numbers, with slight increases from the addition of Garden Babies and summer camp enrollment. Additionally, ICG camp prices remained relatively stable, increasing only 5%, while we anticipate a cost adjustment closer to 15% in 2026 to ensure we are able to keep up with rising costs.

The amount raised in 2025 in excess of the 2025 actual need and award remains in our Scholarship Fund as a cushion to be used in subsequent years to ensure cost is never a barrier for children and families to participate in ICG programs.

ICG's Work with the Local Refugee Community

One aspect of our Scholarship Program that we are especially proud of is the continued positive relationship we've built with our key partner, Ithaca Welcomes Refugees. This year, we had three returning refugee families: one family enrolled two children in all available camp weeks and received full scholarship support for those weeks, and one family enrolled two children. This act of trust in ICG's care for their children underscored the value of our work and inclusive efforts.

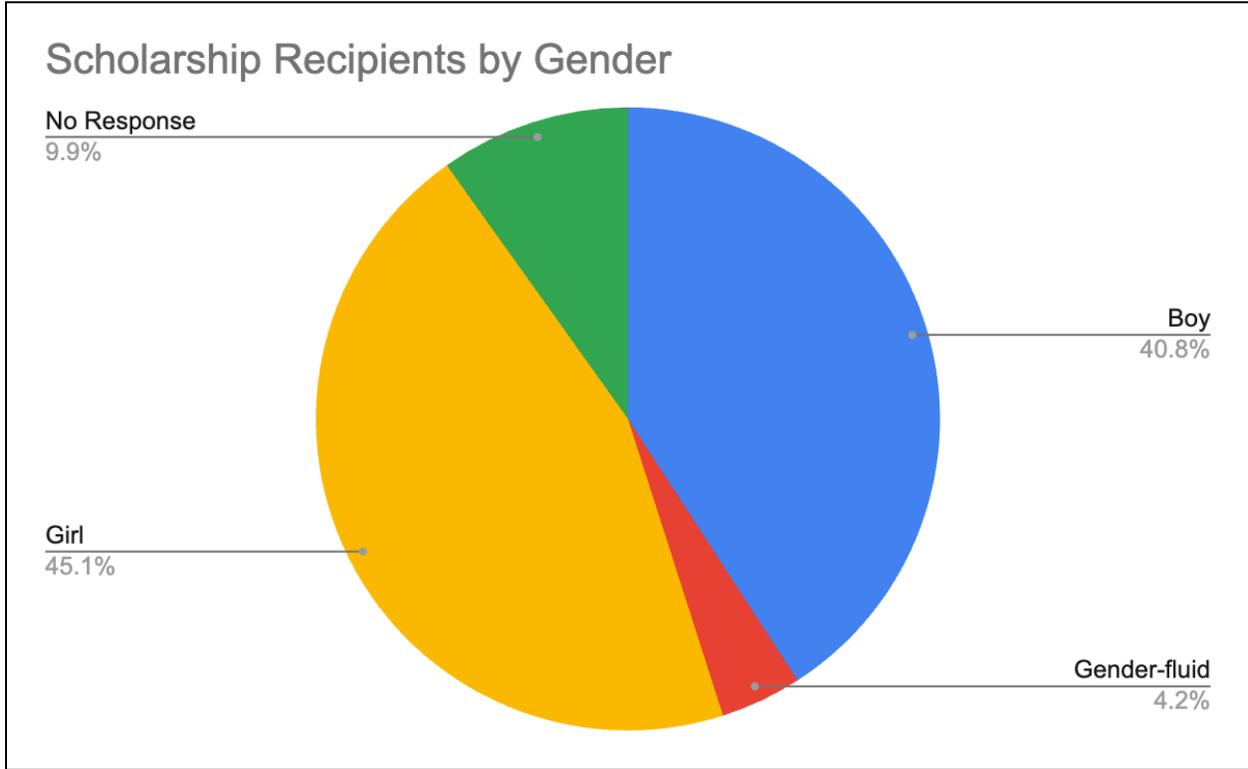
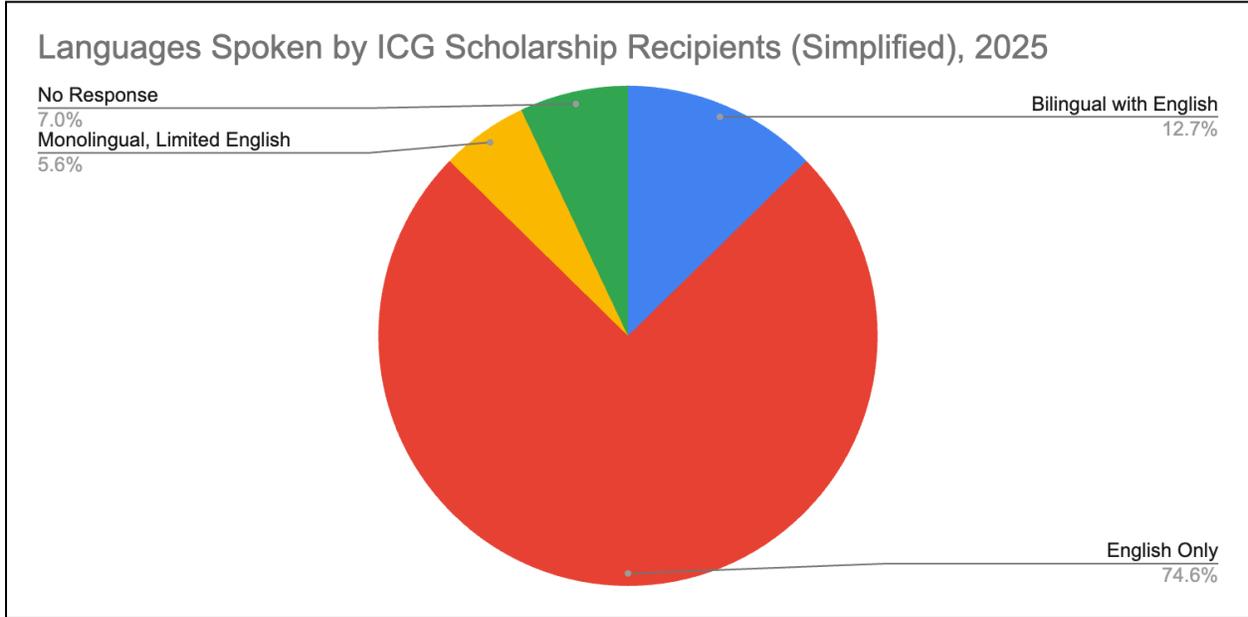
Additionally, we invited IWR's Executive Director, Casey Verderosa, to speak and educate ICG's supporters at our ReJunevate celebration held in late June.

Read more about ICG's long-standing partnership with IWR in this blog post:
<https://www.ithacachildrengarden.org/nurturing-new-roots-icgs-scholarships-cultivate-hope-and-growth-for-refugee-families/>

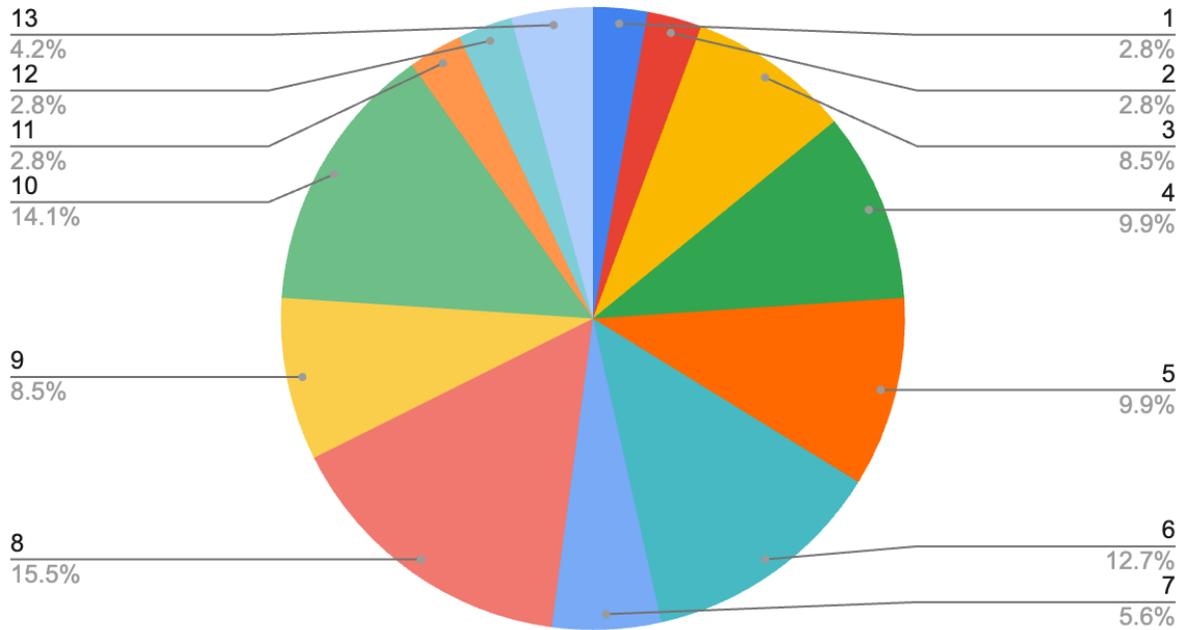
Beyond

Ensuring we reach new families who aren't yet familiar with ICG or ICG's Scholarship Program is a perennial challenge and priority. We are actively investigating the most effective ways to communicate broadly (well beyond our existing channels) to the greater Tompkins County community about ICG's Scholarship Program, ensuring that all who could benefit are aware of it. We are exploring a series of public service announcements starting early 2026.

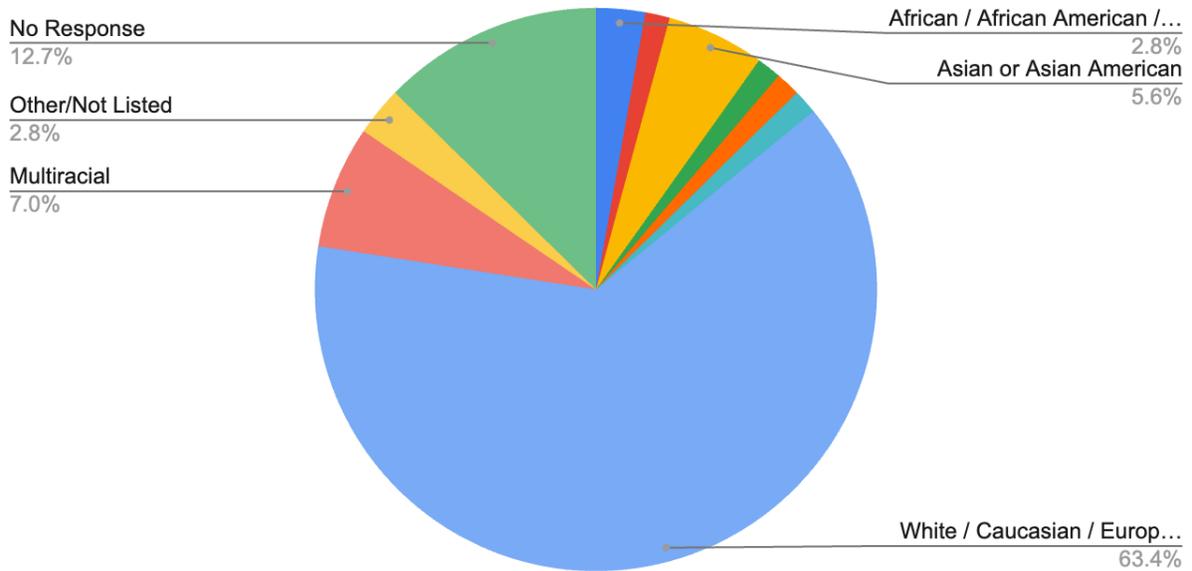
Demographic Tables



Scholarship Recipients by Age



Races of ICG Scholarship Recipients (Simplified), 2025



Testimonials from Scholarship Families

Please take a moment to read the following testimonials from parents regarding ICG's scholarship program.

ICG's Scholarship Program has impacted our family in every way — without it, Keith would not have been able to participate in Playful Nature Explorers. As artists and creators, funds are beyond tight. This scholarship is, in a way, also supporting the local arts community by allowing lower-income families to be included. That's so important and unique. - Molly

Because of ICG's scholarship program, my child has received the best preschool education I could have imagined for her. She has made friendships with her educators that she will never forget. As a first-time parent, worried about my child's entry into the educational system and how she would be received, it warmed my heart to learn that her teachers really loved her and missed her when she was gone. They understood her so well and were there to guide, inspire, and build her confidence. I could not possibly be more grateful for Kelsey and Jason being in my child's life. - Marina

Ithaca Children's Garden has all the fundamental values we look for in a child care program, but we wouldn't have been able to afford Summer Camp without the scholarship fund. Now we can have our children experience the excellent and unique values the Garden upholds while also being able to pay for our living expenses. - Laura

“My daughter gets so much out of participating in Playful Nature Explorers (PNE). She plays in the dirt, rain, and snow, and has learned to express her own limits. During her time in PNE, her language skills have blossomed. She has gained the confidence to communicate her boundaries to children and adults alike — an essential skill for kids to develop. She has learned how to play with other children, navigate

different personalities, and, with consistent support from the PNE coordinators, temper her own responses to dissatisfaction. She is becoming more independent and better able to communicate when she needs help. Without the Scholarship Program, our family would have had to choose a part-time PNE schedule, and we would have struggled to fill her mornings with activities as stimulating as those in PNE.” -Marina

A Few Highlights from our Fall Photo Album

Enjoy these recent selects from the ICG Staff Storytelling Slack Channel:



“A Playful Nature Explorer digs in the fresh soil.”



“A member of Garden Babies toddles towards the Kitchen Garden to give the veggies some water.”



“Using found materials in the Hands-On-Nature Anarchy zone to create a swing.”



“A young ‘Tough Turtle’ takes on the Jr. obstacle course with determination.”



“A Garden Baby found a baby cabbage in the Kitchen Garden!”



“A field trip attendee offers one of ICG’s rabbits a snack.”

Thank YOU.

Your support makes ICG's Scholarship Fund possible. Every dollar brings a child closer to meaningful experiences in nature while providing essential childcare for working families. Thank you for investing in our community in such a meaningful way.

If you have questions or want to discuss how we can better serve our community, please reach out. We want to hear from you.

Sincerely,



Erin Martea
Development Director
giving@ithacachildrengarden.org